

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9768

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

SECDEF

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJ: GOP SPEECH ON ASIAN SECURITY AND US BASES IN THE
PHILIPPINES

1. ACTING FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY COLLANTES SPOKE BEFORE
PHILIPPINE MANAGEMENT CONGRESS NOVEMBER 24 ON "THE CHANGING
BALANCE IN ASIA". COLLANTES RECOUNTED ASEAN ASPIRATIONS
IN FAMILIAR TERMS SETTING THEM AGAINST BACKDROP OF MAJOR
POWER INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES IN REGION. IN ONE OF MOST
INTERESTING PASSAGES, COLLANTES SAID: QUOTE WE CAN
ONLY CONCLUDE THAT FOR THE PRESENT AT LEAST THE OLD BALANCE
OF FORCES HAS NOT BEEN SERIOUSLY DISTURBED IN A WAY WHICH
SHOULD CAUSE RADICAL ALTERATION IN THE THINKING OF SOUTHEAST
ASIAN COUNTRIES. THE US REMAINS THE PREDOMINATE POWER IN ASIA.

HAVING SAID THIS, I HASTEN TO ADD THAT NATIONS DO NOT ACT
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ONLY ON THE BASIS OF CURRENT PERCEPTIONS. THEY ACT ON THE BASIS

OF POSSIBLE CONTINGENCIES.

IT IS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CONTINGENCIES THAT THEY SHARE THE UNANIMOUS VIEW THAT THE US SHOULD MAINTAIN A PRESENCE IN ASIA TO AVERT SERIOUS DISRUPTION OF THE GREAT POWER BALANCE IN ASIA. SUCH A DISRUPTION WILL CANCEL ALL THE GAINS WE HAVE ACHIEVED AT SUCH GREAT COST AND THREATEN OUR VERY SURVIVAL. UNQUOTE.

2. COLLANTES WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE PRINCIPAL MOVING FORCE IN THE LIFT OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IS NATIONALISM AND THE DESIRE TO BE FREE FROM THE DOMINATION OF ANY POWER OR GROUP OF POWERS. HE INDICATED THAT ASIAN LEADERS WANT TO MAINTAIN A POWER BALANCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SO THAT THEY WILL NOT HAVE TO TAKE SIDES BECAUSE OF "THE PREDOMINANT PRESENCE OF ONE POWER OVER ANOTHER".

3. IN QUESTION PERIOD FOLLOWING SPEECH, COLLANTES WAS ASKED WHETHER THE GOP WOULD ALLOW THE SOVIET UNION TO USE THE US BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES. PRESS REPORTS THAT COLLANTES REPLIED: "NO. IT WILL NOT BE IN PHILIPPINE INTEREST TO ENTERTAIN ANOTHER POWER TO USE THESE BASES". COLLANTES ADDED THAT THE BASES AGREEMENT IS CURRENTLY BEING NEGOTIATED AND THE GOP WANTS TO "ELIMINATE ALL VESTIGES OF EXTRA-TERRITORIALITY IN THESE BASES. WE WANT COMPLETE CONTROL AND OWNERSHIP OF THE BASES". COLLANTES REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE GOP WILL ALLOW THE US TO CONTINUE TO USE THE BASES UNTIL THE ASEAN ZONE OF PEACE, FRIENDSHIP AND NEUTRALITY IS ATTAINED.

4. COMMENT: COLLANTES' SPEECH IS AN UNUSUALLY THOUGHTFUL PIECE AND WE WILL BE CHECKING FURTHER TO SEE WHOSE HAND MAY HAVE GUIDED ITS FORMULATION. WE ARE PASSING COMPLETE TEXT TO ADDRESSEES BY POUCH. SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH "ASEAN" FIGURES PROMINENTLY IN COLLANTES' TEXT, IT IS NOT CONSISTENTLY SUBJECT OF SPEECH AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SUBJECT OF PASSAGE RELATING TO MAINTENANCE OF U.S. PRESENCE IN ASIA WAS DELIBERATELY FUZZED. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW IF ANY ASEAN COUNTRIES TAKE UMBRAGE AT COLLANTES' REMARKS. SULLIVAN

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